/706 cont./

844 work, carrying about with her the little creature whom she protects as best she can" /translated from French/ (Martial:197). Hyades (q):190 says very emphatically: "Childbirth is easy among the Fuegian women" /translated from French/. Nevertheless, even in ●845 earlier times there were occasionally difficult deliveries. In this connection Hahn (a):807 exaggerates slightly when, referring to Bridges, he says that "complications and abnormal positions are not rare in childbirth" /translated from French/.

When Adelheid's first child was born, it was a dangerous cross-
845 birth, and the assistants had great difficulty keeping mother and
842 child alive. Fearing that she would experience the same danger another time, she resorted to the preventive measure recommended to women who do not want any more children. She threw the placenta to the dogs, who devoured it completely. To prove how reliably effective this procedure is, the women constantly pointed to Adelheid who had not become pregnant again for almost two decades. Her husband, Santiago, was extremely worried about her for a long time, but he repeated what another man also told himself in a rare case of a difficult birth: "It is better that I give up having more children than that I lose my wife!" It is the husband himself who demands that the placenta be thrown to the dogs after a seriously difficult birth, or he does it himself, since he is called as soon as the woman seems to be in danger during labor. /707/ Sympathy impels him to this decision; he does not wish to expose his wife again to such pain or danger. Adelheid's sister, Elisa, had
845 trouble, more or less, with each of her six children, and twice she
143 had a miscarriage (p. 493). We probably should not overlook an inherited tendency in this case, for the third sister, Gertie, although she has had a few premature deliveries, has not carried a single healthy child for the normal period. No one will be able to determine whether European civilization has had a detrimental effect on these women. Their mother, who is still living, did not have such difficulties.

3. The Parents of the Newborn Child

844 As we have said, every Yamana woman gives birth in her own dwelling, if possible. She is assisted by an actual midwife and sometimes also by the adopted mother of the new baby. Her

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851 girl has arrived and that his wife is well. He receives the news with joy and satisfaction. Usually he still stays away for a time because the new baby must have further care; later on he returns to his family. It is a foregone conclusion that the parents warmly welcome each child (128). It is more as a rhetorical wish than for a

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128. Hyades (q):376 mentions only briefly that Fuegian parents seem to have no preference for boys or girls.

conscious purpose that the father hopes for a boy and the mother for a daughter, unless the two have agreed on one or the other because all the rest of their children are of the opposite sex. Bridges (i):21 maintains, without qualification: "More pleasure was expressed at the birth of a son than of a daughter" /cited in English/; the reason he (a):182, 203 gives elsewhere is not convincing: "Boys are coveted as offspring...Boys are much preferred to girls as offspring, since they are a source of strength and protection when they grow up to their parents" /cited in English/. Twins, known as wolakémen, must be regarded as an extraordinarily rare phenomenon; not a single one of the older people could remember a twin birth.

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844 The newborn baby is first of all thoroughly washed (129).

129. Hahn (a):805 says briefly: "The newborn baby is immediately cleaned with fine wood shavings" /translated from French/. Bridges (a):181 is more explicit: "When the infant is born, the attending females take the child, wash it with cold water, and the soft scrapings of wood, which they also use as a towel" /cited in English/. Dabbene (b):189 gives fewer details.

This is done by the adopted mother. She squats on the ground and places the baby on her upper thighs, holding it upright with both her hands. Several times she takes a mouthful of water, keeps it in her mouth for a few moments until it has become somewhat warm, and squirts it on the child like a shower spray. Progressively she

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and Dabbene (b):190 repeats it verbatim: "The newborn babies are immediately bathed in the sea; the poor creatures, of course, often pay for this superstition with their lives." Contrary to this latter assertion is the fact, according to the memory of my informants, that not a single newborn child died in this bath. It is held in the water for only a second or two. Other travelers also mention this bath, without definitely describing the real facts. Bridges (a):182, for instance, says: "Children, generally within a few days of their birth, are dipped in the cold sea, from a superstition that it makes them grow well" /cited in English/. Compare Bridges (b):208.

and quickly dries it off with [illegible]. Hurriedly she carries it back to the hut and wraps it well in a soft skin. I was told: "The bath in sea water immediately after delivery is very good for mother and child, and that is why the Yamana have always kept it up!" It is only on an extraordinarily cold day that a woman will sometimes omit it (132). When the ablutions are over, the child is

132. Hyades (c):193 confirms that for several days the young mother takes at least one bath a day, unless the weather is unusually cold. For example, the woman mentioned above did not go into the water on the fourth day "because of the cold," the Fuegians say. It is, as a matter of fact, the coldest day of the year (-7.3°), and a thick blanket of snow covers the ground" /translated from French/.

nursed for the first time. After that the mother rests for a while; sometimes she herself undertakes to clean the hut and set it in order.

All traces of the delivery are destroyed in the fire. A stillborn or aborted child is regularly destroyed in a blaze outside the dwelling.

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The Yamana say that the reason for the rare cases of premature births is great carelessness on the part of the pregnant woman in running and working or a heavy blow and shock /710/ in falling. We have already mentioned on page 491 when and how voluntary abortion is practiced. A defective baby is immediately destroyed by the mother (133). A crippled child, unfit for life, who is born alive is

133. The following description by Bridges (1):21 fits here: "Unnatural births were always destroyed and wisely so. For unimportant defects, or such as proved themselves afterwards as for instance deafness, no one was destroyed but only for enormities" /cited in English/.

not killed, but they consciously devote less attention to caring for him, hoping that he will soon die. Such an unfortunate creature is not directly exposed to danger or hunger, but inconspicuously and purposely neglected.

Without exception the Foegian women who have been confined permit themselves only a short rest, one day at the most (134).

134. Hahn (4):607 confirms that the young mother "resumes her work the same day" /translated from French/. It is well known that the Seli'nam women are also capable of this (Vol. I, 366).

They feel no need for it, and furthermore they are told that they should move about and be active as soon as possible. Since giving birth does not cause Indian women any difficulties, it occasionally happens that a woman in an advanced state of pregnancy has her child while at work. For example, she might go into a nearby thicket to gather wood and reappear in her hut after about three hours displaying her newborn baby. Only a few years ago in Puerto Harberton an Indian woman went into the large woodshed of the farm there. After a good two hours she returned to her family, holding a bundle of wood in one arm and, in the other, the child

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847 desolate. Under normal circumstances this cannot possibly be
626 accepted. If an overwrought woman let herself be carried away to such an extent that she would do this, her relatives would immediately call her to account and make her atone for the crime. Secondly: a misshapen monster ("deformity") was immediately and silently destroyed by the midwife or the mother; other people were not told of it, and only the father, perhaps, was given a slight hint. It is almost ridiculous to mention the discomfort of the neighbors caused by the child's crying as the third reason for its murder. Such gross stupidity has never been reported from any other region. Fuegian children cry very little in any case (p. 520). If their crying bothered anyone, he could always build his hut elsewhere. Fourth and finally, neither a father nor a mother who expected a boy would have killed a girl following many sisters, for each child is of untold value to them. This murder would by no means have remained secret and would always have been severely condemned. /726/ Fred Lawrence very emphatically dismissed these four motives for infanticide maintained by Bridges (160), with the exception of a deformed prema-

160. It would be most uncritical to rely on Fenton to prove infanticide, because, as John Lawrence assured me, he passed through that region once in two days without contacting the natives.

ture birth.

847 It is not to be denied that a deformed or premature child, un-
• 845 fit for life, is done away with, but a rumor that I heard proves how
626 carefully a woman must go about it. Walter's wife had a child in 1905, half of which was a normal human being, but the other half of the body was supposed to have been covered with feathers. When she saw it after delivery, she became frightened, as did the two women who attended her. She decided to kill it immediately and did indeed hit it on the head with a hard object, but the creature went on living. Then she threw it on the ground with great force. Even then, however, it was not dead, so she buried it in the ground and covered it with a layer of stones; it continued to

/726 cont./

847 cry from under the ground for some time, but finally it stopped.
845 Although Walter's wife herself did not divulge any details about
626 the incident, her attendants on that occasion apparently gossiped about it. Since then she has not been safe from silent, but clearly noticeable reproaches from other women who severely condemned her action. Only a few of her friends sympathize with her about her misfortune. Everything points to the fact that the Yamana never approve of infanticide and severely condemn the malefactor.

6. Child Statistics

163 Through a regrettable error Martial:198 made the statement that "one rarely sees families with a large number of children" /translated from French/. Other members of the Mission Scientifique convincingly contradict him. In reality, Fuegian families commonly have many children. Usually the Indian girl becomes a mother as early as her sixteenth year. Accurate counts are impossible because of the resistance of adults who refuse to speak about deceased children (161). Bridges (MM:XVIII, 223;1884)

161. Hyades (q):189 also encountered this difficulty.

repeatedly tried to determine accurately the population of the Yamana, for example, in June, 1884, but he could not find out the total number of children in each family.

We have a certain gauge in the observations of Hyades (q):189 in the region around Orange Bay in 1882, that is to say, at a time when the population had already been noticeably influenced by the Anglican missionaries. Among eight women from 35 to 40 years old he counted a total of 18 living children, namely,eleven girls and seven boys; among eight women from 25 to 30 years old there were again 18 living /727/ children, ten boys and eight girls. The sources of error in these data are so obvious that any comment is superfluous. Hyades was well aware of them and did not fail to point out a 50-year-old Fuegian woman who had given birth to 14 children; a 45-year-old woman was the mother of nine, and

/728 cont./

842 some. As a result the Yamana have the idea that sterility in marriage is solely attributable to the woman, whom they call a cápula. Thus this unusual fact (168) is not /729/ completely un-

168. The unreliability of what Hahn (a):805 maintains is obvious: "Sterility is very common in both sexes, according to Mr. Bridges, who attributes it to the precocity and the abuse of sexual relations" /translated from French/.

known, and they pity the woman who is forever denied the blessing of children. My inquiries agree with Hahn (a):805 that "spontaneous [843] abortion is very rare" /translated from French/. It happens almost always as a result of great physical exertion or very great shock.

162 According to all the observations that we know of, the sexes are somewhat unevenly distributed in favor of girls among the Yamana. The venerable John Lawrence assured me of this, and in Hyades (q):190 we read: "In our observations we have also established a slight predominance of girls over boys" /translated from French/. A census taken by Bridges in 1884 (p. 324 /untranslated, but the figures referred to are given in English/) showed that among 1,000 natives there were only 277 men as against 316 women.

•845 In this tribe of Fuegians twins are just as rare as among the neighboring Selk'nam (Vol. I, 300). From former times I am familiar with only the one definite report that "Jemmy Button's eldest daughter has two beautiful twin children about four months old" /cited in English/ (ARM XII, 274;1877). Later Hyades (q):190 mentions a woman 45 years old among whose ten children there was a pair of twin brothers. Finally, Holmberg (z):57 maintained: "I have a photograph of a Yahgan woman with twins, who are regarded as an extraordinary event" /translated from Spanish/. Were these witnesses really reliably informed? At any rate a twin birth is an extraordinarily rare phenomenon.

165 There are no accurate observations about the menopause, the time when menstruation ultimately ceases. Bridges and Hyades (q):189 observed pregnancy among women who were already 45 years old. Hence Fuegian women conceive until relatively late